

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2013 BRISTOL BAY SALMON SEASON SUMMARY

The following is an overview of the 2013 Bristol Bay commercial salmon season. Fishing has been completed in all districts and preliminary harvest totals should be representative for all species. It should be noted that numbers in the narrative are expressed in rounded forms for simplicity and that all data are considered preliminary.

The 2013 inshore Bristol Bay sockeye salmon run of 23.0 million fish ranks 15th over the last 20 years (1993–2012) and was 36% below the 36.0 million average run for the same period. This year's sockeye run was 12% below the preseason inshore forecast of 26.0 million fish. Togiak and Nushagak districts were slightly above forecast (2% and 8% respectively), while Egegik, Ugashik, and Naknek/Kvichak districts were below preseason expectations (4%, 13% and 32% respectively). The run was composed of a 15.4 million fish harvest and 7.6 million fish escapement. The 15.4 million sockeye salmon commercial harvest was 6% below the 16.6 million preseason forecast. The escapement estimate does not include the Alagnak River where data is no longer collected.

Approximately 19,000 Chinook salmon were harvested in Bristol Bay in 2013, 71% below the average harvest for the last 20 years (64,604). The chum salmon harvest of 872,000 fish was 10% below the 20-year average of 959,000 fish. Bay-wide coho salmon harvest was 135,000, 80% above the 20-year average of 75,000. Reported pink salmon harvest was 511 fish.

Also of note was the sinking of the tender vessel Lone Star in the mouth of the Igushik River. The tender sank on June 30 and a section of the Nushagak District was eventually closed for the season as a result of fuel leaking from the vessel. This closure reduced harvest in that area of the district and allowed increased escapement into the Igushik River. The Igushik River sockeye salmon escapement exceeded the upper end of the escapement goal range by 29% (Table 5).

EXVESSEL VALUE

The Bristol Bay 2013 harvest of all salmon species was 16.4 million fish with a preliminary exvessel value of \$141 million which is 26% above the 20-year average and ranks 7th over that same period. The weights, harvests, and prices listed in Table 1 were used to estimate exvessel

value. This estimate does not include future price adjustments, loyalty bonuses, and differential prices for refrigerated versus non-refrigerated fish. Although the harvest was below the historical average, the increased price per pound caused the value to be above average.

Table 1.—Average price, weight, and value of salmon harvest in Bristol Bay, 2013.

Species	Average price/Lb.	Average Weight	Number of Fish	Total Weight	Value
Sockeye	\$1.50	6.0	15,376,432	92,258,592	\$138,387,888
Chinook	\$0.77	18.6	18,616	346,258	\$266,618
Chum	\$0.30	6.4	871,558	5,577,971	\$1,673,391
Pink	\$0.30	3.1	511	1,584	\$475
Coho	\$0.80	6.0	135,000	810,000	\$648,000
Totals			16,401,606	98,994,405	\$140,976,372

ALLOCATION

The 2013 season was the 16th year of managing drift and set gillnet sockeye salmon harvest allocation in four of the five districts in Bristol Bay. Togiak District is excluded from the allocation plan. Table 2 lists the allocations adopted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries in November, 1997 and the resulting harvests by gear group, from June 1 to July 17, for the 2013 season.

Table 2.—Allocation of Bristol Bay drift gillnet and set gillnet harvest, 2013.

District	Drift Gillnet	Set Gillnet	Set Gillnet
	Percent of Harvest	Percent of Harvest	Percent of Harvest
	Allocated /Caught	Allocated /Caught	Allocated /Caught
<i>Naknek / Kvichak</i>	84% / 84%	16% / 16%	<i>Naknek:</i> 8% / 8% <i>Kvichak:</i> 8% / 8%
<i>Egegik</i>	86% / 85%	14% / 15%	Not applicable
<i>Ugashik</i>	90% / 90%	10% / 10%	Not applicable
<i>Nushagak</i>	74% / 78 %	26% / 22%	<i>Nushagak:</i> 20% / 17%
	WRSHA: 74% / N.A.	WRSHA: 26% / N.A.	<i>Igushik:</i> 6% / 5%

Strategies used to achieve allocation percentages between gear groups included varying the amount of fishing time and providing separate gear group openings.

SPECIES PERFORMANCE

Sockeye Salmon

The 2013 inshore sockeye salmon run of 23.0 million fish was 12% below the preseason inshore forecast of 26.0 million. Runs versus forecasts by district with percent difference from forecast are listed in Table 3. Table 4 compares the 2013 harvest to recent 20-year averages for all districts.

Table 3.—Difference of Bristol Bay actual run versus forecast, 2013.

District	Inshore Forecast	Inshore Run	% Difference from Forecast
Naknek-Kvichak	10,610,000	7,817,015	32% less
Egegik	6,060,000	5,879,949	4% less
Ugashik	3,530,000	3,070,893	13% less
Nushagak	5,250,000	5,681,635	8% more
Togiak	590,000	602,078	2% more
Totals	26,030,000	23,051,570	12% less

Table 4.—2013 preliminary commercial sockeye harvests compared to the 20-year averages by district:

District	1993–2012 Average Sockeye Harvest	2013 Sockeye Harvest
Naknek-Kvichak	7,876,000	4,790,279
Egegik	7,933,000	4,766,319
Nushagak	5,709,000	3,173,091
Ugashik	2,696,000	2,172,783
Togiak	626,000	473,960
Totals	24,765,000	15,376,432

Sockeye salmon escapements by river system are listed in Table 5. The Nushagak and Igushik rivers were above the established escapement goal ranges while all other systems were within ranges.

Table 5.—Bristol Bay sockeye salmon goals and escapement, 2013.

River System	Goal Range ^b	Escapement
Kvichak River	2,000,000–10,000,000	2,088,576
Naknek River	800,000–1,400,000	938,160
Egegik River	800,000–1,400,000	1,113,630
Ugashik River	500,000–1,200,000	898,110
Nushagak River ^a	370,000–840,000	894,172
Wood River	700,000–1,500,000	1,183,348
Igushik River	150,000–300,000	387,036
Togiak River ^b	120,000–270,000	128,118

^a Nushagak River optimal escapement goal (OEG) is 260,000.

^b Togiak, Igushik, Nushagak, Wood, and Naknek Rivers are defined as Biological Escapement Goals (BEG). All other escapement goals for sockeye salmon in Bristol Bay are Sustainable Escapement Goals (SEG).

The 2013 Bristol Bay sockeye salmon run was slightly under forecast and generally early to very early depending on river system. Spring temperatures in the Bering Sea were closer to long term averages during the salmon season than the last several years. Total sockeye harvest and total inshore run were 6% and 12% below forecast respectively. The Wood River and Naknek River special harvest areas were not used in 2013.

Chinook Salmon

Chinook salmon harvests in Bristol Bay were below average in every district. One directed Chinook salmon fishing period occurred in the Nushagak District on June 14 with a harvest of 518 fish. Chinook salmon are also caught during directed sockeye periods in all commercial districts and approximately 19,000 fish were harvested. Chinook salmon escapement into the Nushagak River was 113,709 and within the escapement goal range of 55,000 to 120,000. Chinook harvest by district is presented in Table 6.

Table 6.—Chinook salmon preliminary harvest data compared to the 20-year averages by district.

District	1993–2012 Average Chinook salmon Harvest	2013 Chinook salmon Harvest
Naknek-Kvichak	2,293	391
Egegik	872	106
Ugashik	1,204	23
Nushagak	51,864	15,357
Togiakl	8,140	2,739
Totals	64,604	18,616

Chum Salmon

The 2013 preliminary Bristol Bay chum salmon harvest was 872,000 fish. Nushagak and Naknek/Kvichak districts produced a harvest above the 20-year average, while Egegik, Ugashik, and Togiak districts produced less chum salmon than their 20-year averages. Nushagak District was the largest producer of chum salmon, where over 523,000 fish were harvested.

Pink Salmon

Pink salmon runs are strong during even years and 2013 was an off cycle year for Bristol Bay. A total of 511 pinks were reported in the commercial catch.

Coho Salmon

Because of limited buyers, harvest information for coho salmon in the Nushagak District in 2013 is proprietary. Bay-wide harvest of coho salmon was 135,000 fish.

Table 7.—Preliminary 2013 Bristol Bay salmon harvest and escapement by district and species.

District	Sockeye	Chinook	Chum	Pink	Coho	TOTAL
Naknek-Kvichak Catch	4,790,279	391	267,341	2	^a	5,058,374
Escapement-Kvichak Twr.	2,088,576	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	2,088,576
Naknek Twr.	938,160	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	938,160
NK Subtotal	7,817,015	391	267,341	2	^c	8,085,110
Egegik Catch	4,766,319	106	42,758	0	^a	4,766,319
Escapement-Egegik Twr.	1,113,630	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	1,113,630
Egegik Subtotal	5,879,949	106	42,758	0	^a	5,923,621
Ugashik Catch	2,172,783	23	30,811	0	0	2,023,716
Escapement-Ugashik Twr.	898,110	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	898,110
Ugashik Subtotal	3,070,893	23	30,811	0	0	3,101,727
Nushagak Catch	3,173,091	15,357	523,031	317	^a	3,711,796
Escapement- Wood Twr.	1,183,348	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	1,183,348
Igushik	387,036	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	387,036
Nushagak	894,172	113,709	628,133	N.A.	207,222	1,647,493
Nushagak Subtotal	5,637,647	129,066	1,151,164	317	207,222	6,929,673
Togiak Catch	473,960	2,739	7,617	192	^a	492,115
Escapement - Togiak Twr.	128,118	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	128,118
Togiak R. & Trib.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	0
Kulukak	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	0
Togiak Subtotal	602,078	2,739	7,617	192	^a	620,233
Bristol Bay Catch	15,376,432	18,616	871,558	511	135,000	16,402,117
Bristol Bay Escapement	7,631,150	113,209	395,162	N.A.	207,222	8,346,743
Bristol Bay Total Run	23,007,582	131,825	1,266,720	511	342,222	24,748,860

Note: Escapement data for coho are incomplete (in most cases the data are escapement index counts). Total run data do not include sport or subsistence harvests.

^a proprietary information